

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. PW Camp 7354/14 in Bulshoy Zaporozhye was situated about 20 miles west of Lyubitino (58°45'N-33°32'E) and 150 kilometers southeast of Leningrad. Lyubitino was a railroad junction of a single track line that ran (58°14'N-33°31'E) with the main Leningrad-Moscow railroad. It consisted of a large building 150 x 120 m, two smaller buildings 30 x 10 m and a barrack 15 x 8 m, and a combination bathhouse and delousing room 25 x 7 m. A kitchen, messhall, and jail were housed in yet another building. Electricity was furnished the camp from a small generator. Approximately 40 PWs were assigned to this camp.
2. The surrounding villages were said to have remained unchanged for some 50 years. This was borne out by the ramshackle appearance of the houses, usually one-story with one or two rooms, without stables or wells. In general there were only two or three wells in a village. No electricity was available to these villages. Most of the inhabitants appeared undernourished, especially those in the age groups reaching puberty and over 40. Incomes were low, living conditions poor, the small dwellings overcrowded. Uncleanliness of person and quarters made lice common, fleas in great number everywhere, especially in houses with many children. Rats and mice infested every building. Gastro-intestinal disturbances were common, probably induced by unclean food and contaminated water. The wells were not covered, permitting entrance of dirt and filth. Even in these conditions, however, source did not encounter any cases of typhus.
3. There were two hospitals in the area, a civilian hospital known as the "Polinita", located near the PW camp, and a PW hospital in a large building within the camp.
4. The civilian hospital was poorly equipped. The beds were shabby and occasionally men and women were assigned to the same room. Food and medicine were furnished by the patients themselves or their relatives. No instruments or anesthetics were available, and it was impossible to carry out an appendectomy. Very minor operations were performed with the use of ethyl chloride as an anesthetic. No surgical aid at childbirth was available. Autopsies were performed in a small hut adjoining the hospital by a male nurse who had no other dissecting instruments than a scalpel. There were no laboratory facilities and no microscope. Water was obtained from the nearby brook, which was also used for laundering purposes and for watering the houses from a stable nearby.

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5. No competent doctor was assigned to this civilian hospital. The nurses displayed little interest in the patients, and were also used to assist with farm work. Because the civilian population had little confidence in the medical personnel assigned them, they requested permission of the Soviet camp commandant to consult the German PW physician, who also did some dental work since there was no dentist in the area.
6. Medical supplies for the civilian population were scarce until February 1949. At that time sulfa drugs became available at a village store, but by prescription only.
7. Somewhat in contrast to the medical situation of the civilians in the area, the PW camp hospital consisted of an isolation section, a dispensary, and a convalescent section, and from October 1947 on had received a greatly improved supply of drugs and equipment. Sulfa drugs were available in adequate supply for the camp patients. However, some of these medical supplies were traded to the village folk for food and money by the nurses, who did not receive sufficient salary to purchase bread in the village.
8. A lack of sound medical training was evidenced in a number of ways. Source estimated that only two-fifths of the entire medical training for Soviet physicians was devoted to scientific fundamentals, the other three-fifths to practical training at the bedside. Source thought that training for Soviet nurses consisted of two years of schooling with a greater emphasis on practical bedside training to the neglect of scientific fundamentals. Medical personnel were not familiar with such common medical terms as "phthiasis", not to mention more complicated ones. Soviet physicians experienced difficulty in making diagnoses. Soviet medical treatment appeared to be directed toward alleviating symptoms rather than toward removing causes. The sick man was considered more or less as a defective machine to be corrected by a set line of procedure. For instance, if fever was a symptom, sulfa drugs were employed regardless of whether the fever was produced by malaria, pneumonia, or some other disease. The use of akrikhin as a substitute for atabrine in the treatment of malaria was found to be inadequate. Soviet medical personnel frequently treated civilian patients by a "cupping" technique, i.e., the use of suction on the skin by means of glass cups which were warmed and then pressed, inverted, on the flesh.
9. Soviet drugs appeared to be products of a backward pharmaceutical industry. The vaccines were darker than German products and when injected for inoculation caused considerable pain. Source heard of one new drug, which was highly regarded. It was known as "streptocid" (phonetic approximation of the Soviet word), and was said to be related to penicillin. There was a scarcity of drugs in general, and medical personnel at every health station experienced difficulty because of it. In November 1947 it item appeared in a Soviet paper (possibly in The Medical Newspaper) which stated that Atrakhin was suffering from a shortage of insulin. In this same paper there were articles and an editorial by the Minister for the Chemical Industry and the directors of the Moscow and Leningrad pharmaceutical factories which dealt with problems of production and packing of medicines in tablet and powder form.
10. Ambulance transportation in the country areas was primitive. There were no medical transport compartments on trains. Accident patients were transported in regular compartments, whether military or civilian. Ambulance trucks appeared to be available only in larger cities and at large district polyclinics such as that at Malaya Vishera near Leningrad.
11. The PWs received an average of 230 calories per day which was inadequate nourishment for the work demanded of them.

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